

**CLAIMS**

1. A support for apparatus in general and, in particular, for optical or photographic apparatus and the like, comprising a pillar (12) arranged to receive the apparatus at a first end and to be housed with its stem (11) in a seat (4) extending through a spider (3) of a tripod (4), the support comprising, at the first end, an orientable platform (14) for the levelling of the apparatus independently of the positioning of the tripod (1), the pillar (12) being structurally independent of the spider (3), capable of being inserted removably in the seat (4) and being slidable therein, characterized in that the orientable platform (14) comprises a first ball and socket joint including a ball (16) and a socket (15) fixed firmly to a fixing plate (17) of the platform and to the stem (11) of the pillar, respectively, or vice versa, and a tie rod (23) acting between the socket (15) and the ball (16) in order, when tensioned, to prevent relative rotation thereof, said tie rod (23) extending through the stem (11) of the pillar and being operated by means of a knob (29) associated with a second end of the pillar (12), remote from the first end.
2. A support according to Claim 1 in which spirit-level means (22) are associated with the plate (17).
3. A support according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which fixing means (20) for a head (T) for the orientable support of the apparatus are associated with the plate (17).
4. A support according to one or more of the preceding claims in which the fixing means comprise at least one screw coupling which can clamp the head (T) or apparatus against the fixing plate (17) and at least one grub screw (21) which can preload the screw coupling between the plate (17) and the head (T) or apparatus.
5. A support according to one or more of the preceding claims in which a knob (29) is

**Best Available Copy**

- screwed onto the tie rod (23) by operative actuation of the knob (29).
6. A support according to claim 5 in which the knob (29) is associated removably with the tie rod (23) in order to be removed for the purpose of the removal of the pillar (12) from the seat in the spider (3) and its insertion therein.
  7. A support according to one or more of the preceding claims in which a small plate (34), removable with the knob (29), is interposed between the knob (29) and the pillar (12) and can project radially from the pillar (12) in order to prevent the pillar from accidentally slipping out of the seat.
  8. A support according to Claim 7 in which the small plate (34) is fixed firmly to the female thread (28) of the knob.
  9. A support according to one or more of the preceding claims in which preloading means are provided on the tie rod for ensuring a friction load in the first ball and socket joint when the tie rod is slackened.
  10. A tripod including a support according to one or more of the preceding claims in which locking means being provided between the spider (3) and the pillar (12) for locking the pillar (12) in the seat (4), in an adjustable position along the stem (11).
  11. A tripod according to Claim 10 in which the locking means comprise a brake (35) mounted in the spider (3).
  12. A tripod according to Claim 10 or Claim 11 in which the shape of the stem (11) of the pillar (12) and of the seat (4) in the spider (3) is such as to provide a non-rotatable guided coupling of the pillar in the spider.

Best Available Copy